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ABSTRACT

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) serves Hudson County, New Jersey. Although the county is the smallest in the state, its 610,000 residents make up one of the most diverse counties in New Jersey. Approximately 40% of residents are Hispanic, 12% are African-American, 10% are Asian, and 35% are White. The county is also home to a growing Middle Eastern population. Asians and African-Americans are the fastest growing student groups at HCCC. This Periodic Review Report (PRR) documents the changes and developments that have been implemented at HCCC during the past 5 years. They are represented in three forms: (1) Responses to 1997 Evaluation Team's Recommendations; (2) Significant Institutional Changes reported to Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE); and (3) Significant Developments. This paper includes brief highlights from each section of the report made by the evaluation team that visited HCCC in 1997. Highlights include: Institutional Vision, Mission, and Goals; Organization, Administration, and Governance; Human Resources; Faculty, Educational Programs, and Curricula; Library, Media, and Information Technology; Students and Student Services; Planning, Research, and Outcomes Assessment; Financial Resources and Physical Plant; and Institutional Advancement. (NB)

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ED 469 385

Hudson County Community College
Periodic Review Report
Executive Summary

Hudson County Community College
New Jersey

June 2002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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Periodic Review Report
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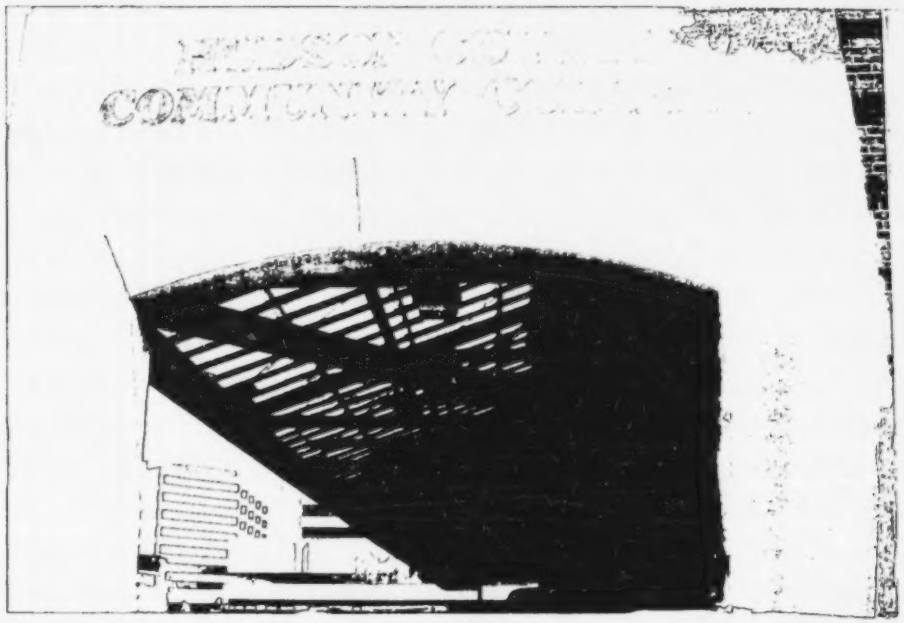

Dr. Glen Gabert, President

Commission action which preceded this report: - "At its session on November 15, 2000, the Commission on Higher Education acted to accept the follow-up report submitted by Hudson County Community College, and to request that the Periodic Review Report, due June 1, 2002, document progress in implementation of the comprehensive institutional strategic plan."

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Date of evaluation team's visit: September 14-17, 1997

Submitted to
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2000, President Gabert asked the Dean of Planning and Institutional Research to serve as Chair of the Periodic Review Report (PRR) Steering Committee and to work with other members of the President's Executive Council (President, Vice Presidents, Deans) to design a process that would ensure widespread input into the preparation of the PRR. A decision was made to appoint a ten member Steering Committee including the Dean as Chair. In addition, the Executive Council members would serve as resources and as liaisons to each of the College's standing councils (i.e., Academic Affairs Council, Student Affairs Council, Faculty and Staff Development Council, College Technology Council). The President and the Dean of Planning and Institutional Research were to serve as liaisons to the Board of Trustees.

Given the historical circumstances in which Hudson County Community College (HCCC) was established and the nature of the community it serves, a brief orientation to the historical and social context of HCCC will assist in the understanding of the significant developments documented and challenges raised in this Periodic Review Report.

Hudson County Community College was established in 1974 as the 17th of the 19 community colleges in New Jersey. At the time, it held the status of being the only Community College Commission in the State. The official name of the College from 1974 to 1981 was Hudson County Community College Commission. The two most recently established community colleges in New Jersey, Warren County Community College and Sussex County Community College were also established as Commissions and used the HCCC experience as a model. The essence of the Commission model is that while such colleges have degree-granting rights, they lack a campus and are to enter into contractual agreements with other regionally accredited colleges, cooperating colleges, for the use of their facilities and faculty. Currently, the only course offered on the campus of another institution is a microbiology laboratory course offered at New Jersey City University.

The College owns and is in the process of acquiring additional sites in the Journal Square area of Jersey City. In addition, a College owned site for the location of the North Hudson Center has been identified. At present, this Center is located at a former parochial school in West New York.

In 1993, the Board of Trustees adopted a new mission statement calling for the transformation of the College from a limited-mission institution with a focus on AAS programs and career preparation to a "comprehensive community college." The College was now to provide transfer programs (AA, AS); career-oriented programs (AAS); general education, academic foundations, bilingual and English as a Second Language courses; student support services; and credit and non-credit community service and continuing education courses and programs.

The recent (2000) completion of a five-year USDOE Title III $1.7 million funded project ("A Bridge To The Future") enabled the College to review and develop general education courses and to integrate such required and optional courses into each of its degree and certificate programs. The funds also enabled the development of a computer based student information and tracking system.

It should come as no surprise that a priority for HCCC is the provision of quality academic and support programs and services for the urban at risk and underprepared student. These programs and services were always offered directly by HCCC faculty and staff, even during the Commission period. Upon entrance, all students who wish to pursue a degree or certificate are tested for placement purposes. Of the 2,654 new students in the fall of 2001, 27 percent were in need of ESL, 69 percent were in need of at least one area (English, Reading, Mathematics) of academic foundations, and only four percent (N=112) were prepared for a full program of degree credit courses. In the fall of 1997, 13 percent (N=195) were prepared for degree credit courses. During this period, the number of students in need of ESL increased by 41 percent, the number in need of academic foundations increased by 143 percent , and the number in need of no ESL or academic foundations decreased by 43 percent. HCCC provides tutorial and counseling support (College funded; Perkins; Educational Opportunity Fund, NJ; SSSP); and language, computer, and writing centers for all of its students, and in particular for ESL and academic foundations students.

In March of 2002, HCCC submitted two five-year proposals to the USDOE under Title V- Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program. If funded, these projects will have a significant impact on the educational success of students enrolled at HCCC. The first proposal, "Improving Systems for Academic Success" is a request for $2,032,834 to support the creation of a "Center for Academic Success" and to help support a "Center for Innovation." The second proposal, "Improving the Pipeline for Latinos in Education: A Systematic Collaborative Among Three Urban HSI's," is a collaboration among HCCC, Passaic County Community College, and New Jersey City University. The total request is for $3,004,330, and HCCC's share is $969,382.

The comprehensive mission statement is certainly necessary if HCCC is to serve the needs of the approximately 610,000 residents of Hudson County. Although the County is the smallest in NJ (46 square miles; less than one percent of the total area of the state), its population is highly diverse. Approximately 40 percent of the residents are Hispanic, 10 percent are Asian, 12 percent are African-American, and 35 percent are white. During the past decade, Asians increased by 40 percent and Hispanics by 32 percent. In addition, the County is home to an increasing Middle Eastern population. Concurrently with the increase in racial/ethnic diversity, the Hudson River waterfront has recently attracted middle class residents and businesses from New York City and the surrounding region.

The diversity of the County is reflected in the diversity of the student population. For example, 43 percent are Hispanic, 17 percent African-American, and 12 percent Asian. For the past five years, Asians (37%) and African-Americans (25%) have been the fastest growing student groups.

The College offers 21 degree programs (16 AAS plus two options; one AA plus eight options; four AS plus three options), 10 certificate programs, and a broad range of ESL, general education, academic foundations, and bilingual (English/Spanish) courses. These programs and courses are offered through four academic departments: Business & Social Science; Culinary Arts; English & Humanities; and Mathematics, Science, Technology & Allied Health. The liberal arts (AA), cooperative nursing (AS) and computer Science (AS) are the programs with the largest enrollments. Also, during the past five years a number of the AA options (e.g., liberal arts general, business, early childhood education) experienced the greatest percentage increases.

For the period fall 1997 – fall 2001, HCCC's student credit headcount increased by 27 percent (N=1,124; from 4,161 to 5,285). This is particularly significant given the two percent (N= 2,658) increase for the community college sector in the State. The College accounted for 42 percent of the increase among New Jersey's 19 community colleges for this five-year period. Over the next five years, the College's projections call for an enrollment of 7,003, or a 32 percent increase (N=1,718). Given the College's recent increases, the size and needs of the County's population, development of new facilities in Jersey City, plans for a new site in Union City, and the fact that the College's penetration rate of approximately one percent is less than one half that of the average community college in New Jersey, these projections are realistic and perhaps somewhat conservative. These projections are updated figures of the "high model" presented in the June 2000 strategic plan, Building the Future. For each of the past two years, the actual enrollments exceeded the projections in this model (8.8% vs. 5.8%; 8.9% vs. 5.1%).

In order for HCCC to meet the challenges of providing for more students, offering a greater diversity of courses and programs, and providing essential student services (student center, performance and meeting areas, physical fitness center, etc.), new and expanded facilities are essential. At the April 11, 2002 meeting, The Hudson County Community College Board of School Estimate approved two resolutions. The first provided a total of $19,000, 000 (state and county) for the acquisition and renovation of a number of properties in the Journal Square area of Jersey City. The second provided for an additional $15,000,000 (state and county) for the acquisition and renovation of properties in the Journal Square area of Jersey City and in Union City.

The PRR documents the changes and developments that have been implemented at HCCC during the past five years. These are presented in three forms: (1) Responses to 1997 Evaluation Team's Recommendations, (2) Significant Institutional Changes reported to MSCHE, and (3) Significant Developments.

In its report, the Evaluation Team that visited HCCC over September 14-17, 1997, suggested that its recommendations "should not be considered prescriptive but

rather suggestive of a number of options the Institution may want to explore in addressing the concerns identified by the team." We believe that we have benefited from our detailed review and analysis of each of these 61 recommendations. A brief highlight from each section of the report is presented below:

Institutional Vision, Mission and Goals – As part of the strategic planning process, the Mission Statement has been reviewed and a 20 member President's Advisory Council has been established. The Council provides advice to the President "regarding the development and implementation of programs to implement the College Master Plan." The status of the 30 strategic actions presented in Building the Future is reviewed on an annual basis.

Organization, Administration and Governance – A review of the College's major Councils is in process, a division of Information Technology has been created, and the division of Continuing Education has acquired equal status with other College divisions.

Human Resources - Policies and procedures are in the process of being formalized and presented in a Personnel Manual, and the number of faculty and staff orientation and benefits awareness programs has been increased. In 1998, the Faculty and Staff Development Program was one of three nationally to receive the Institutional Award from the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (NCSPOD).

Faculty, Educational Programs and Curricula - The number of full-time faculty has increased by 43 percent, from 49 (1996/97) to 70 (2001/02). During the past five years, 15 degree programs have been revised or established, general education requirements have been reviewed and integrated into each program, a new academic standards policy has been approved, a cyclical program review process has been started, and since 1996, twenty-eight articulation agreements have been developed or revised. The Division of Continuing Education and Community Services has been restructured (Program Operations, Center for Business and Industry, Computer and Technical, ESL and Adult Basic Education, and Health in 2003), programs have been diversified, and the number of students served annually has increased from approximately 1,000 to over 6,000.

Library, Media and Information Technology - Progress has been made in the integration of information technology into educational programs and services such as the Library. A North Hudson Center branch of the Library opened in the summer of 2001. The "Strategic Plan for Information Technology" was adopted in June 1998 and the position of Dean of Technology/Instructional Support Services/Learning Resource Center has been created and filled. The number of computer labs has increased from 15 (1996/97) to 23 (2001/02) housing a total of 573 computers.

Students and Student Services – The positions of Associate Dean for Enrollment Management and Associate Dean for Student Services have been established and filled. An Enrollment Management Plan has been developed and implemented. Information

technology has been integrated into all aspects of financial aid management, admissions and records, and the degree audit system.

Planning, Research and Outcomes Assessment – In 1997, a five-year cyclical review schedule for all academic programs and selected College offices and areas was established. As of fall 2001, reviews have been conducted for Academic Foundations, Accounting, Bilingual Offerings, Culinary Arts, Electronics Engineering Technology, Grants, Learning Communities, and Tutorial Services. Other studies conducted include reviews of College assessment practices, costs per credit hour, employment trends, enrollment trends, high school proficiency testing, retention, and safety and security. Perhaps the most significant development to occur during the past five years has been the creation of a five-year strategic plan for HCCC (Building The Future: Comprehensive Strategic Plan). The Plan was developed by a 20 member Master Planning Steering Committee and two consultants. The consultants were Dr. Richard Alfred, Professor of Higher Education in the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, University of Michigan, and Ms. Patricia Carter, Executive Director of the Consortium for Community College Development, also located at the University of Michigan. Focus groups of internal and external stakeholders were conducted. In addition, surveys were conducted of HCCC students, teachers and counselors at the 31 public and private high schools in the County, and all 10^{th} and 12^{th} grade students at the high schools. The Plan was presented to the Board of Trustees at its September 2000 meeting.

Financial Resources and Physical Plant – The significant developments the College has made in its move from rented and leased facilities to appropriate College owned facilities have been cited. In terms of financial resources to support the implementation of The Strategic Plan, an increase from the FY '02 operating budget of $25,863,885 to a FY '07 operating budget of $34,397,885 is anticipated. This increase reflects projected continued enrollment increases.

Institutional Advancement – The College Foundation has been established, and in three years has created a number of scholarships and held a number of fundraising events. The position of Assistant to the President has been added to the staffing table, and a principal responsibility for this position is to serve as Executive Director (manager) of the Foundation. Activities of the Foundation support the strategic actions identified in Building the Future.

PRR Steering Committee

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John DeCicco, Faculty, Chair, Faculty Senate
Anacely Gonzalez, Director, Student Services, North Hudson Center
Barbara Harmon, Counselor
Samuel Lumbsden, Director, Continuing Education Program Operations and Community Services
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